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presents *Labatt*

blues festival

Friday

gate 4:30 • show 5:30

Rockin' Highliners

Rosie Ledet "The Zydeco Sweetheart"

Lone Star Shootout featuring Lonnie Brooks,

Phillip Walker & Long John Hunter

Saturday

gate 1:30 • show 2:30

Hot Cottage with "The Craft Horns"

Bryan Lee "The Braille Blues Daddy"

Debbie Davies

James Harman

The Fabulous Thunderbirds

Sunday

gate 1:30 • show 2:30

Big Dave MacLean and the Tim Williams Electric Band

Maurice John Vaughn

Walter "Wolfman" Washington & The Roadmasters

Shemekia Copeland


Anson Funderburgh & The Rockets featuring Sam Myers

August 25•26•27

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Hawrelak Park

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tickets - available at 

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Chateau Louis 11727 Kingsway Ave.

Advance 3 day pass ... \$80 (July 16th - August 20th)

Gate 3 day pass ... \$90

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Friday \$25 • Saturday \$35 • Sunday \$35

(GST and service charge extra)

www.BluesInternationalLtd.com

Labatt



Chateau Louis



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A word from the producers

The team at Blues International is pleased and proud to bring you Edmonton's Labatt Blues Festival. This, our second annual event, promises to be bigger and better. We have made room for one more act on Sunday afternoon, and increased our artistic budget, enabling us to bring bigger names to this year's festival at the Heritage Amphitheatre in Hawrelak Park.



For those of you have never been to the Amphitheatre in Hawrelak Park, prepare yourselves for a musical experience unparalleled in Edmonton. With its incredible acoustics, great sight lines, dance floor, covered seating and cozy atmosphere the Amphitheatre is perfect for our party.

And our event is Western Canada's Premier BLUES happening. Over the course of three days we will bring you a total of 13 acts. Performers who have never been to Alberta and old favorite hit the stage this weekend. They span the BLUES spectrum, from the funky New Orleans sound of Walter "Wolfman" Washington, to the Chicago blues of Maurice John Vaughn. The Texas sound is represented by The Lone Star Shootout, featuring no less than three headliners who have been on the scene for decades, Lonnie Brooks,

Long John Hunter and Phillip Walker. The Fabulous Thunderbirds bring their distinctive, gritty sound to our stage and blues purists will thrill to the authentic blues of James Harman. No party would be complete without Zydeco, and Lafayette's Rosie Ledet, the "Zydeco Sweetheart" will have us on the dance floor. The new generation of BLUES men and women is represented by vocalist Shemekia Copeland

and Canada's own Rockin Highliners. Acoustic blues fans will get a taste with Big Dave McLean and Tim Williams. Texas and Mississippi meet with our closing act on Sunday, Anson Funderburgh and the Rockets with Sam Myers, three time winners of the W.C. Handy Award for "best blues band".

We invite you to enjoy the show, let the good times roll, and come again next year.

Of course, no show of this size could go on without the help of some very dedicated and experienced volunteers, and ours are the best.

Let's take a moment to recognize them here, and when you see them on site, you may want to say thanks in person . . .

A special thank you to all of our volunteers

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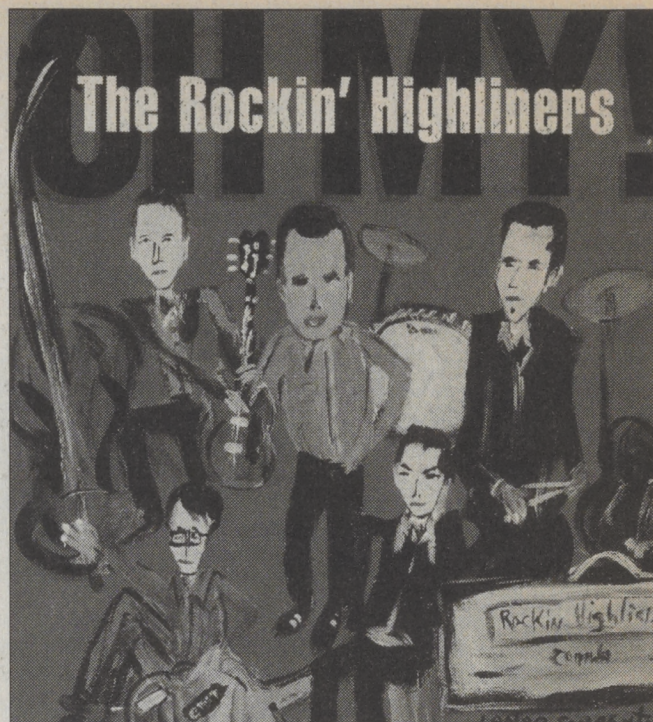
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The Rockin' Highliners

FIVE-MAN JUMP-BLUES BAND

This year's Edmonton's Labatt Blues Festival will begin with a performance by The Rockin' Highliners, who can claim to be the most popular blues band in Canada.

For the past two years, this five-piece, jump-blues unit has played between 200 and 250 dates a year, the vast majority of them in Canadian cities and towns from Sydney to Nanaimo. "The only time we get out of the van is to play somewhere where there is a crowd of people ready for us to rock," says vocalist Robert Tycholis.

The band consists of Tycholis, a booming singer and charismatic front man, the powerhouse twin guitars of Clayton Sample and Greg "Junior" Demchuk, Chris Brzezicki on acoustic and electric bass, and the one non-Albertan in the band, Winnipegger Ken McMahon on drums. Robert, Clayton, and Ken have been with the band from its early days. Junior, who had been the guitarist in the Vancouver blues band The Twisters, joined the band last fall, and Chris rejoined the band (he was the original bassist) over the past winter. Special guest Dave Babcock brings his sax to the group for this performance only.

You don't want to miss hearing this polished and potent band under the trees in Hawrelak Park late Friday afternoon, August 25!

Rosie Ledet

"THE ZYDECO SWEETHEART"

Rosie Ledet, is a 28-year-old woman who can rock out on the button accordion.

Rosie is the reigning queen of zydeco music, the accordion-led blend of blues and Creole music created by the black people of southwest Louisiana, and she's sure to get hundreds of people up and dancing at this year's Edmonton Blues Festival, just as Buckwheat Zydeco did last summer.

"We do a lot of blues festivals," she says. "Zydeco is really sped-up blues. I think zydeco came from the blues, so I think it's kind of like revved-up blues."

Rosie's band, led by herself on vocals and accordion, is a family band. Her husband, Morris Ledet, plays bass and accor-

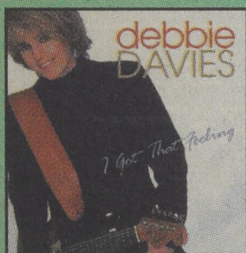


dion; her nephew Corey Ledet is on drums; her father-in-law Lanice Ledet plays rubboard, an essential part of any zydeco band; and Kent August is on guitar.

Rosie Ledet burst onto the zydeco scene in 1994 when her first CD, *Sweet Brown Sugar*, came out on the Maison de Soul label, located in the home base of zydeco, Lafayette, Louisiana. All five of Rosie's CDs have been on Maison de Soul.

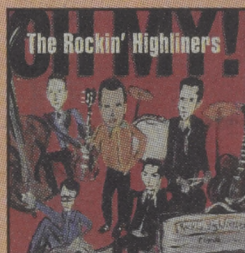
Born in the tiny town of Church Point, Louisiana, she married zydeco musician Morris Ledet and secretly taught herself to play accordion during the day when he was at work.

When she finally performed for him a song she had written and learned to play, he knew a good thing when he heard it and stepped over to play bass, giving the spotlight to Rosie. And she's had it ever since. Catch her in our spotlight Friday night.



debbie davies
I Got That Feeling

brooks, hunter & walker
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the rockin' highliners
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Lone Star Shootout

Lonnie Brooks, Long John Hunter, Phillip Walker

"A BLISTERING BLUES REUNION"

Lone Star Shootout is a blues-guitar celebration that takes its name from a CD made last year by three veteran blues guitarists.

Lonnie Brooks, Long John Hunter, and Phillip Walker all learned to play blues guitar and started performing in the booming oil port of Port Arthur in east Texas in the early 1950s, and all three have been playing the blues for a living ever since, though geographically they went different ways: Long John spent his career in Texas and Mexico, Lonnie went to Chicago, and Phillip moved to Los Angeles.

So all three welcomed the chance to reminisce as well as play together when they were invited by Alligator Records to make *Lone Star Shootout*.

To promote the CD, Lonnie, Long John, and Phillip performed together last summer at eight selected blues festivals, to resounding acclaim: "high-energy, foot-stomping, good-time Texas blues," said *Living Blues*. Buoyed by this success, the trio has juggled their busy schedules so they can perform together at nine blues festivals this summer, including the Chicago Blues Festival in June, the Poconos Blues Festival in July, the Long Beach Blues Festival in September — and the Edmonton



Blues Festival in August.

This August, when they visit Edmonton, Phillip will be 63, Lonnie will be 66, and Long John will be 68, and between them they bring over 130 years of blues experience to the stage. This is the real thing, don't miss it Friday night August 25th.



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Hot Cottage

ROCKIN' THE BLUES EDMONTON STYLE FOR 30 YEARS

A seminal Edmonton blues/rock band, it was 1970 when Hot Cottage first started playing together. Guitarist Steve Boddington, drummer Lyndsey Umrysh and bassist Brian Koehli have been there from the start, and these days are joined by keys player Mike Yuzwenko and vocalist Del Kunitz.

Although the band had its share of hall parties, gigs at the legendary Hovel, and even recorded an album with the great Walter "Shakey" Horton in 1972, work for a blues/rock band in Edmonton was not the sort of job you could build a "life" on. And, life does go on. All the members of the group have careers, but a love for music has kept them tight over the decades.

"We've met and rehearsed every Monday night for over 10 years", drummer Umrysh told me not too long ago. Over the past 3 years the band has resurfaced, gigging at a number of spots around town, doing a few hall parties and generally proving that music, and especially the blues, is not just a young mans game.

Now, an album is in the works, a few opportunities to play are opening up, and Edmonton blues lovers, old and young, are grooving to the sounds put out by Hot Cottage.

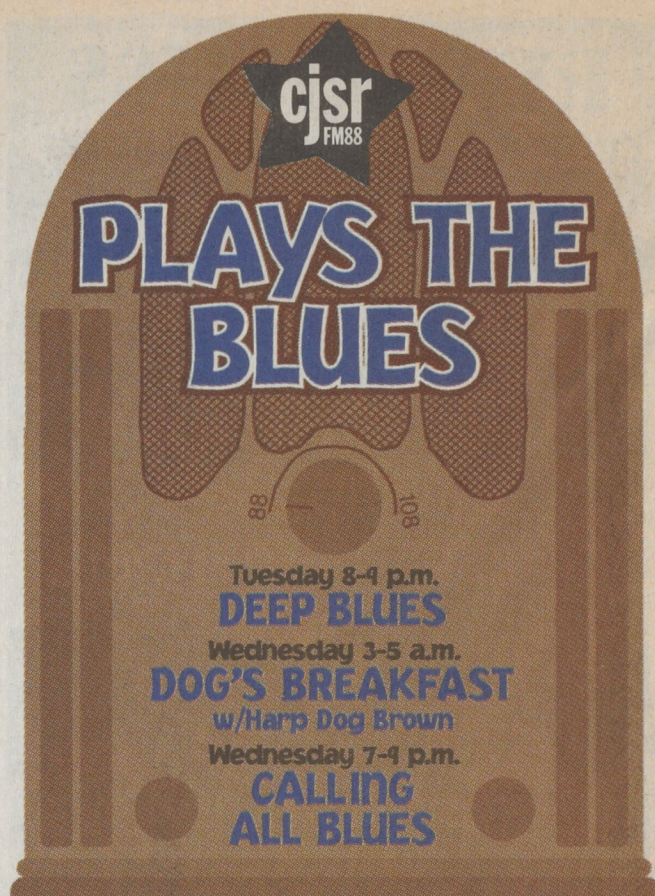
Edmontons' Labatt Blues Festival is proud to present Hot Cottage as the opening act on our Saturday schedule. For this performance Hot Cottage will be joined by the 4 piece "Craft Horns" for a high energy launch to Saturdays' festivities.



blues festival
PARK N RIDE

PARKING
A reminder that parking at Hawrelak Park is on a first come first served basis. In order to avoid congestion we suggest that you use the Park N Ride service from the Stadium Parkade at the University of Alberta (116th St. and 89th Ave.)

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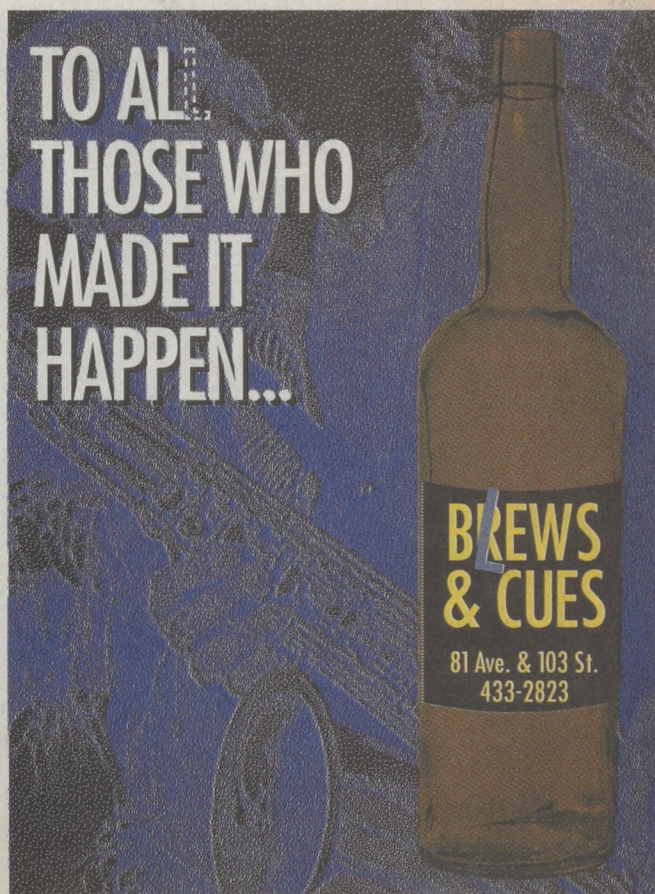
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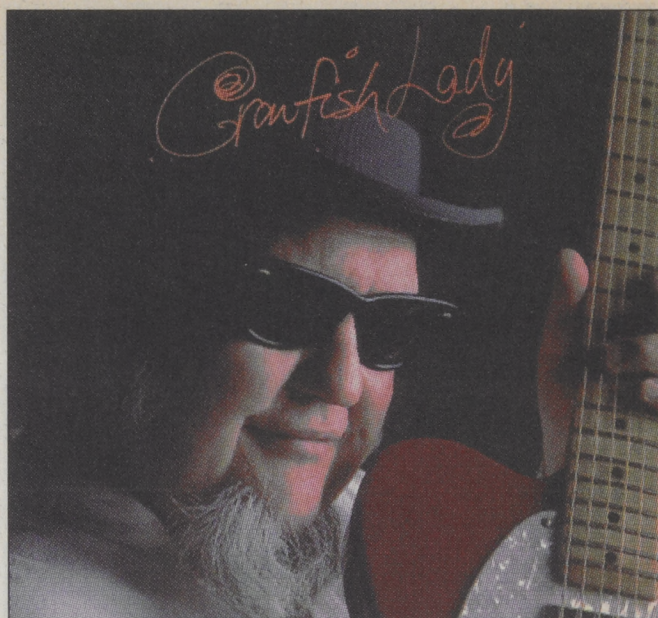
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Bryan Lee

"THE BRAILLE BLUES DADDY"

Bryan Lee has been playing tough blues guitar for almost all of his 57 years, but he will always be best known for his fourteen-year house gig at the Old Absinthe House Bar on Bourbon Street in New Orleans.

Five nights a week, Bryan and his band The Jump Street Five played hard-driving, straightahead blues in the small, historic bar (the mahogany bar itself was 200 years old). They soon built up a loyal following of blues fans, and visitors to town learned that the Old Absinthe was one place where real blues could be heard.

Soon rock and blues legends such as Eric Clapton, Sting, Robert Plant, James Cotton, and Johnny Winter took to hanging out at the club and sitting in with the band. A thirteen-year-old Kenny Wayne Shepherd had his first experience of playing onstage when he sat in with Bryan and his band.

Bryan Lee was born in the small mill town of Two Rivers, Wisconsin. His eyes were damaged at birth, and by the age of eight he was completely blind. His main activity as a boy was music, and by the time he was ten he was spending every night playing his guitar to the blues and rhythm and blues songs he heard on the radio on WLAC from Nashville, Tennessee.

After making his way as a musician in Spokane and Milwaukee, drawn by the power of New Orleans music and realizing that it would be relatively easy for a blind man to navigate in the compact French Quarter, he moved there in 1982.

Bryan and his band played Edmonton's Commercial Hotel in the summer of 1996, and people are still talking about his polished, high-energy live show. Check it out, Saturday evening August 26th, at Edmonton's Labatt Blues Festival!

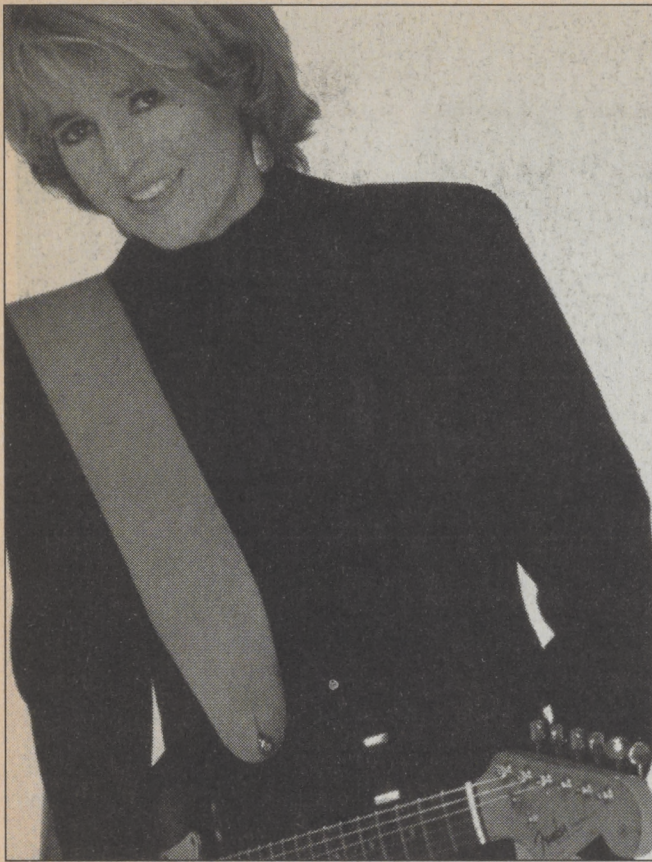
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Debbie Davies

BLAZING GUITAR, SULTRY VOCALS

Debbie Davies is a guitar-slinger who learned her trade by playing four years as second guitarist in the band of the late and great Albert Collins. "She can stand up to any guitarist--male or female," Collins said of her playing, and her tough, driving style of blues won her the W.C. Handy Award as female contemporary blues artist of the year in 1997.

Debbie has released five CDs in her own name, the latest being *Tales from the Austin Motel*, which came out last year on the Shanachie label and has her playing with Stevie Ray Vaughan's former rhythm section, drummer Chris Layton and bass player Tommy Shannon.

1998 was a significant year for Debbie. In May, she won the W.C. Handy Award as female contemporary blues artist of 1997--and became the first white woman and the first guitar player to do so. In that year she also switched record labels and released a CD, 'Round Every Corner, on her new label, Shanachie.

Her performance Saturday night at this year's Edmonton Blues Fest will be her first in Edmonton, and she'll be bringing her own trio, consisting of herself on guitar and drummer (and frequent songwriting collaborator) Don Castagno and bassist Alan Hager. She performs some 200 nights a year on the road with this unit, so you can expect a polished and powerful show from 'them Saturday night.



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James Harman

"BLUES HARP - THE REAL DEAL"

James Harman has been fronting his own bands since he was 16 years old. In the 38 years since then he has staked a claim as truly original, legitimate and talented blues artist.

Harman is also a very talented songwriter, chronicling the musicians' life in his songs with energy, wit and humour. He has a novelists' eye for detail and irony, and the result is well conceived music that stands the test of time. In fact his song "Walk Around Telephone Blues" is currently up for a W.C. Handy award as blues song of the year.

What will we hear Saturday evening when the James Harman band takes the stage? The music of the James Harman Band pre-dates rock'n'roll guitar heroes or blues rock power trios. As Harman notes proudly it is "Strictly the blues". Music that while original, is drenched in the older stylistic flavors of blues, R&B, and masters such as Sonny Boy Williamson, Big Walter Horton and others.

Harman and Co. have polished their skills to become modern-day blues performers who know the difference between innovation and imitation. Harman never lets the listener forget the he is a disciple of the classic qualities of the Southern blues tradition, but his own character clearly shines through. In all cases, Harman remains true to his credo: Strictly The Blues.

It has been nearly a dozen years since James Harman last performed in Edmonton, on a sweat drenched night at the old City Media Club where the jamming lasted until the wee hours with the late, great Big Miller and Pinetop Perkins with Little Mike and the Tornadoes. That performance was indelibly etched on the minds of all who were in attendance.

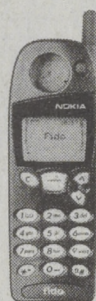
It is our pleasure to welcome James Harman back to Edmonton, and the stage of Edmonton's Labatt Blues Festival.

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The Fabulous Thunderbirds

The Fabulous Thunderbirds will close Saturday night at this year's Edmonton Blues Festival doing what they have done so well for the past twenty five years, blasting out hard-rocking fifties-style roadhouse blues.

"For Texas blues, the T-Birds are still the last word in sass, flash, and low-down raunch," said The Fort Worth Star-Telegram of the band's live show last year.

The T-Birds began life in 1975 in Austin, Texas, when Kim Wilson, the virtuoso harmonica-player who remains the band's vocalist, frontman, and main songwriter, and lean-and-mean guitarist Jimmie Vaughan, older brother of Stevie Ray, joined forces. They named the band after the Ford Thunderbird, the long and low-slug car that was considered so cool and sexy in the 1950s.

From the start, the band played a distinctive mix of Texas, swamp, and Chicago blues, with a healthy dash of Tex-Mex rhythms and a jolt of rock-and-roll intensity. After being the house band at Antone's club in Austin, where they backed up the likes of Muddy Waters and Albert King, they became recording stars in their own right after their first album, self-titled but better known by its cover slogan, "Girls Go Wild," came out in 1979.

After fifteen years of mounting success, and seven albums, the band faltered badly when Jimmie Vaughan left in 1990.

The T-Birds took on two guitarists in his place, Duke Robillard (lead) and Kid Bangham (rhythm), but by 1993 Duke Robillard had left, their CD *What That Walk, Talk That Talk* (1991) had disap-



pointed many of their fans, and Kim Wilson had moved into several solo projects. In these years Kim put out two CDs of his own, *Tigerman* (1993) and *That's Life (If You Call It Living)* (1994), and founded his own record label, called — significantly — Blue Collar Music.

In 1995, after a 4 year hiatus, Kim Wilson decided to revive the Fabulous Thunderbirds. As guitarist he chose Kid Ramos, the muscular and pompadoured guitarist who had played seven years in the band of James Harman (who performs right before the T-Birds Saturday night at the blues fest); he also decided

to add a piano player to the guitar-and-harmonica sound of the T-Birds and called on Gene Taylor, originally from Toronto but best known as a members of The Blasters. On bass he brought in Willie J. Campbell from Harman's band, and longtime T-Birds drummer Fran Christina returned.

The new T-Birds put out a well-received CD in 1995, *Roll of the Dice*, and began touring. This is the version of the T-Birds that closed out the Jazz City festival in Edmonton three summers ago, and this is the line-up that will perform this August in Hawrelak Park.

Big Dave McLean and Tim Williams

FELLOW TRAVELLERS ON THE BLUES HIGHWAY

Winnipeg's Big Dave McLean and Calgary's Tim Williams, the two foremost country-blues performers in Canada today, will start off Sunday's line-up at this year's blues fest with the festival's only acoustic set.

And then, as if to illustrate the history of the blues, the two will drop their acoustic instruments, plug in electric guitars, and play a rousing set of ensemble blues with Tim's three-man backing band, which features keyboard ace Ron Casat, Suitcase James on bass, and drummer Kevin Belzner.

Big Dave and Tim both came to the blues in the mid-1960s, inspired by the records and performances of "rediscovered" country

bluesmen like Mississippi John Hurt and Son House. Each man, Dave in Winnipeg and Tim in southern California, quickly moved from being a fan to being a country-blues performer himself, and each has spent thirty-plus years making a living as a blues musician.

The two men are good friends and made a two-man acoustic CD together in 1998, *Fellow Travellers*. On it, they take turns on the vocals, and Big Dave plays guitar and harmonica, while Tim performs on guitar, mandolin, and banjo. Many Edmontonians will remember their deep-blues show at the Sidetrack Cafe in the summer of 1998, backed up by Tim's band, when they toured after this CD was released.

Big Dave, with his husky voice, slashing slide guitar, and emotional delivery, is a downhome bluesman in the mould of the early Muddy Waters. His first recording, in fact, was entitled *Muddy Waters for President*; it is a tape of a live show by Dave and his band The Muddytones at Bud's

on Broadway in Saskatoon in 1989, and after being sold for years as a cassette at his gigs, it has now been re-released on CD.

One song from that CD, Dave's original composition "TV Preacher," made a memorable cut on the Stony Plain anthology of Canadian Blues, *Saturday Night Blues*, in 1991, and Big Dave and his band performed four songs on the live compilation of Winnipeg blues entitled *Wang Dan Doodle*, recorded in 1996. But his big break came in 1998, when Stony Plain released his album, *For the Blues . . . "Always,"* a collection of downhome blues standards such as "Dust My Broom" and "Just Your Fool" (along with one original, the title track). The CD was produced by Colin James, who is only one of the host of younger prairie bluesmen who grew up with Big Dave as their primary role model.

Tim, whose blues style is more gentle, melodic, and understated than Dave's, made his first album, *Blues Full Circle*, in Los Angeles for the Epic label in 1968, when he was twenty; two blues greats, guitarist Pee Wee Crayton and harp-player George "Harmonica" Smith, played in his band on the record.

After moving to Vancouver in the 1970s, Tim settled in Calgary in the 1980s. He has been busy in the nineties: he plays some 275 dates a year; he released two CDs of acoustic blues, *Riverboat Rendezvous* (1995) and *Indigo Incidents* (1997), both containing striking original songs; in the early 1990s he was part of the Alberta acoustic trio Triple Threat (along with harp-player Rusy Reed and guitarist Johnny V — their CD *Terra Firma Boogie* has just been reissued); he is making his first tour of England and Scotland in June and July of this year; a live CD, capturing Tim performing solo and acoustic, will be out later this year. Tim has proved that, if you are good enough and determined enough, you can make a living as an acoustic bluesman in Alberta.

Catch Big Dave and Tim, Sunday afternoon on Edmonton's Labatt Blues Festival Stage.



festival

Maurice John Vaughn

"CHICAGOS' TRIPLE THREAT"

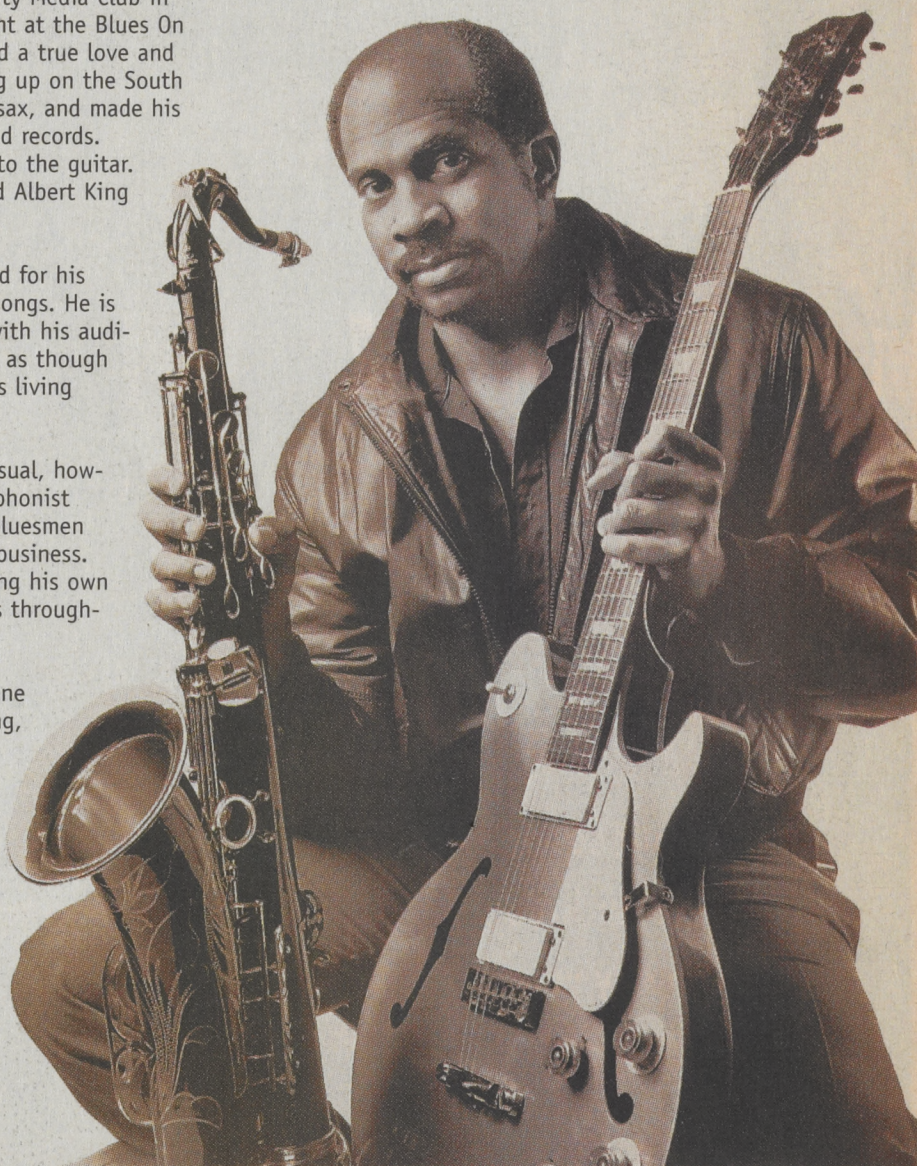
Maurice John Vaughn is no stranger to Edmonton audiences. From his first appearance here at the old City Media Club in the late 80s to this summers week long stint at the Blues On Whyte, Edmonton blues fans have developed a true love and appreciation for this blues original. Growing up on the South Side of Chicago, Vaughn chose to play the sax, and made his first recordings in the mid 70s for Chi-Sound records. When sax gigs began drying up, he turned to the guitar. Echoes of Albert King, John Lee Hooker and Albert King can be heard in his unique style.

Maurice is also known on stage and record for his powerful, innovative, and often humorous songs. He is a tireless performer who loves to connect with his audience. In fact, he loves to talk to the crowd as though they were a group of friends gathered in his living room for a few beers and some tunes.

His approach to music is anything but casual, however. He is an accomplished guitarist, saxophonist and singer. He is also one of the few true bluesmen out there who can handle all facets of the business. He has been booking his own gigs, producing his own records and putting together his own bands throughout his career.

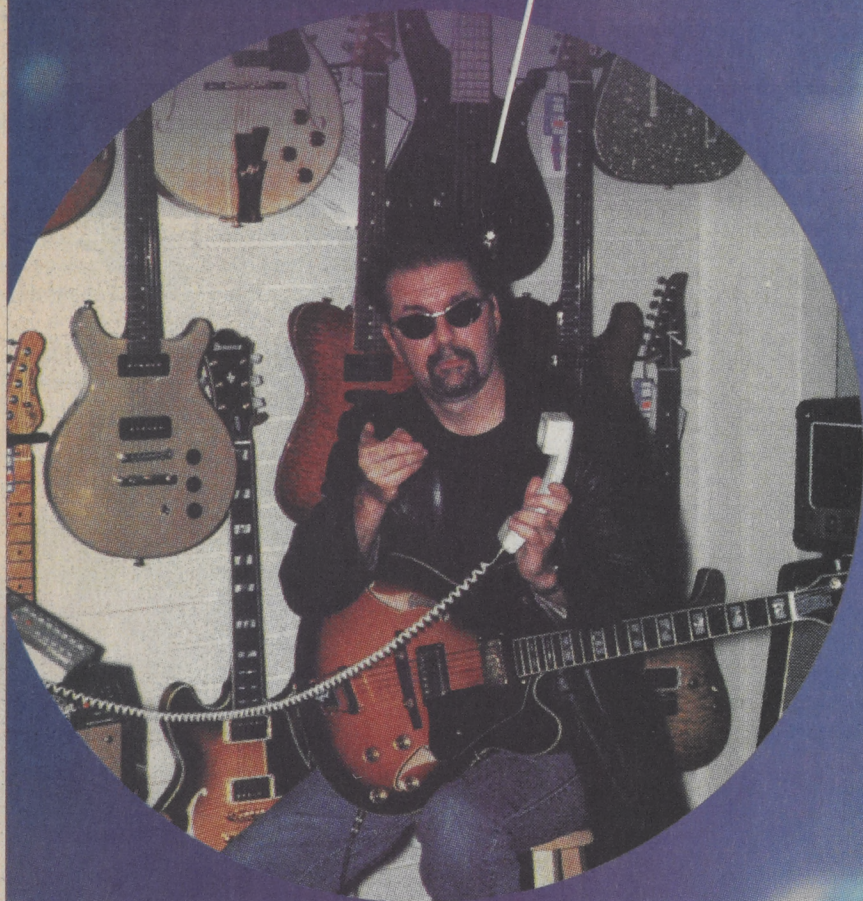
It is no surprise that Guitar World magazine said of him "... Great playing, great singing, bits of humorous storytelling, and that deep, deep feeling."

Catch some of that deep feeling Sunday afternoon at Edmonton's Labatt Blues Festival. Maurice's All Star band will include longtime band mate B.J. Emery on trombone, Calgary's Grammy award winning Don Johnson on drums and vocals, and Edmonton's own Graham Guest on keyboards.



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Audience enjoying E. C. Scott performance.



Deborah Coleman.



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Edmonton's Labatt Blues Festival 1999

1999 was the inaugural Blues Festival and the expectations of organizers and patrons alike were met, and exceeded. From a great opening set by Edmonton based Mark Sterling through to the Alberta debut of guitar maestro Ronnie Earl closing the festivities on Sunday night, ecstatic blues fans were treated to three days of top notch entertainment.

Even a rain squall that roared through on Saturday afternoon couldn't dampen spirits. Those who wanted to, stayed dry under the covered seating or in the beer garden, and those who wanted to boogie in the elements did their thing. The lightning during Deborah Coleman's set underlined her fiery playing, and the double rainbow that arced over the park while Buckwheat Zydeco played seemed to be a celestial sign that this festival was about to make its mark.

Our second year promises even more great memories than the first. We have made room for an extra act, some longer sets, and we have a years worth of experience to make what was an exceptional event, better.

For your enjoyment we present some pictorial memories of 1999's Edmonton's Labatt Blues Festival.

Photos by: Frank Gasparik and Joe Rizzuto



Your hosts: Michael, Carrol and Cam.

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Walter 'Wolfman' Washington

GUITARIST/VOCALIST/SONGWRITER

Walter "Wolfman" Washington is a glorious individualist from a city known for its flamboyant musicians, New Orleans.

The Wolfman's soaring, deep-soul vocals and funky, choked guitar sound are immediately recognizable. And like Fats Domino, Professor Longhair, and many other New Orleans notables, he has a colourful nickname, the result of missing front teeth and prominent eye teeth. "Just like the vampires be looking, that's the way I be looking," he says.

The Wolfman has had his seven-piece band, The Roadmasters, for some fifteen years, and three of the Roadmasters--drummer Wilbert "Junk Yard Dog" Arnold, bass-player (and songwriter and co-arranger) Jack Cruz, and saxophonist Tom Fitzpatrick--have been with him from the start. Two other Roadmasters, trumpeter Larry Carter and trombonist Dave Woodard, joined in the early



1990s, and keyboardist Luca Fredericksen is the most recent addition.

The Wolfman's expressive vocals and jazzy guitar lines mesh perfectly with the churning, horn-dominated sound of the Roadmasters. The overall effect is of a gleaming, well-oiled blues machine that blends soul, gospel, and funk with straight blues.

The Wolfman was born in New Orleans in 1943, and by 1960 he had become proficient enough to go on the road as the guitarist in the band of his cousin, the popular R & B vocalist Ernie K-Doe. In these years he became a pupil and later the favourite accompanist of the great New Orleans singer Johnny Adams.

The band's most recent album, *On the Prowl*, released earlier this year on the Bullseye label, has been greeted with high praise for its "fiery, skintight ensemble sound . . . an overall level of performance that places Wolfman at the top of the class as a contemporary urban blues guitarist and vocalist" (John Sinclair in *Living Blues*).

This band will have people on their feet and dancing Sunday evening in Hawrelak Park!

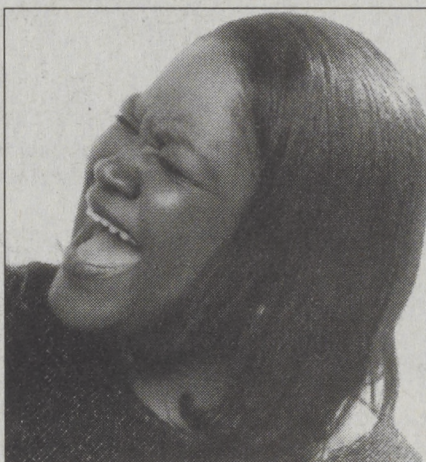
Shemekia Copeland

NEW BLUES SENSATION

Shemekia Copeland is arguably the most exciting new voice in the blues, and she will be making her first appearance in Alberta when she performs at this summer's Edmonton Blues Fest.

Shemekia (pronounced Sha-MEE-ka) is just twenty-one, and when her first and only CD, *Turn the Heat Up*, appeared on the Alligator label two years ago, it was greeted with rapturous acclaim. *Living Blues* named Shemekia Best New Artist in its annual awards for 1998 and declared, "Her promise is as limitless as her talent."

"A blues singing natural . . . gripping and growling voice, spirited and compelling gospel-inflected deep blues," said the *Downbeat* reviewer, and *Jazz Times* declared, "This 19-year-old earthshaker is



continuing the lineage of Big Mama Thornton and Koko Taylor, but with her own vibrant twist . . . a full-tilt roar with blast-furnace intensity."

Shemekia is the daughter of the late and great Texas blues guitarist Johnny Clyde Copeland, and she became a blues singer after her father was diagnosed with congenital heart failure in early 1995 and forced to take some months of rest. When

he returned to performing, he began taking his sixteen-year-old daughter on the road with him, using her as a back-up singer and occasional vocalist. Before long, she was delivering an entire opening set--and often stealing the show.

All reports say that Shemekia's CD, fine as it is, is as nothing compared to her live shows. She regularly gets a standing ovation in mid-set when she moves to the front of the stage and sings "Ghetto Child" without mike straight to the audience.

She will be performing at the blues fest with her touring band, which contains some of New York's finest blues players: the flamboyant female keyboardist Dona Oxford, guitarist Arthur Nielson, and a rhythm section of Barry Harrison on drums and Eric King on bass.

Anyone who enjoyed E.C. Scott's charismatic show at last summer's Edmonton Blues Fest will not want to miss this young blues diva, Sunday night, August 27th.

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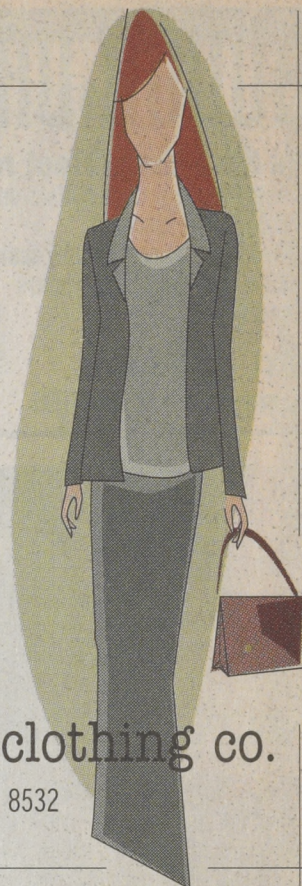
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Anson Funderburgh and the Rockets, featuring Sam Myers

"TEXAS FLASH MEETS MISSISSIPPI SOUL"

Anson Funderburgh and the Rockets, featuring Sam Myers, has been one of the most distinctive, hard-rocking, and successful blues bands on the scene for the past fifteen years. They have won the W.C. Handy Award as Blues Band of the Year three times, in 1987, 1992, and 1994, and they are the only band to play every year at the King Biscuit Blues Festival in Helena, Arkansas, since its inception in 1986.

Now this band, which plays more than 200 dates a year in the United States and Europe, will make its first appearance here, at Edmonton's Labatt Blues Festival.

What makes the band's sound so special is the combination of razor-sharp Texas guitar, provided by Funderburgh, and the down-home Mississippi vocals and harmonica of Sam Myers.

Funderburgh got into the blues in the early 1960s when he was in grade school in the Dallas suburb of Plano, Texas. His mother bought him an electric guitar and the woman she bought it from threw in a box of singles. The box contained Freddy King's "Hideaway," Albert Collin's "Sno-Cone," and Bill Doggett's "Honky Tonk," Anson recalls. "When I heard 'Hideaway,' I thought, *This is the stuff.*"

Anson founded The Rockets in 1978, along with his friend Darrell Nulisch, and the Rockets played a large role in the blues resurgence in Texas at the time, along with The Fabulous Thunderbirds (also headliners in this year's Edmonton Blues Festival) and Stevie Ray Vaughan and Double Trouble.

When Anson and the Rockets played at a small club in Jackson, Mississippi in 1982, Sam Myers, a blues veteran who had made his first recording some twenty-five years earlier, sat in with the band. Soon Anson and Sam were fast friends, and by 1984 they

released an album together, *My Love Is Here To Stay*.

In 1986, Darrell Nulisch, who had been the Rockets' vocalist and harmonica-player for more than seven years, left the band, and Sam joined the band as his replacement and moved to Dallas. The first album by the new band *Sins*, won the 1987 Handy Award as Album of the Year; that same year the band won a Handy as Band of the Year, and Sam's song "Changing Neighborhoods" won the Handy as Son of the Year. Handy as Band of the Year, and Sam's song "Changing Neighborhoods" won the Handy as Song of the Year.

Sam, who is now 66, and who is legally blind, started out as a trumpet-player, and he believes this has influenced his style of harp-playing. By the age of ten, he switched to drums, and he played drums off and on for more than ten years for Elmore James.

In 1960 and 1961, when the young Anson was learning to play "Hideaway," Sam recorded in New Orleans with Elmore James. Elmore played slide on four sides by Sam, including his most famous song, "Angel Child," and Sam played harmonica on several Elmore tunes, including the classic "Look on Yonder's Wall."

The Rockets at this time consists of Anson, Sam, drummer Danny Cochran (who has been with the band for ten years), stand-up-bass player J.P. Whitefield (the original bassist in The Fabulous Thunderbirds), and the newest member of the band, keyboardist John Street. This is the line-up on the band's most recent CD, *Change in My Pocket*, which came out last year on the Bullseye label — and this is the line-up that will close this year's Blues Festival, Sunday night.

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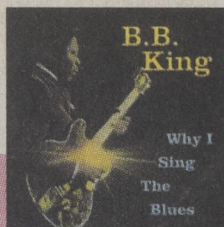
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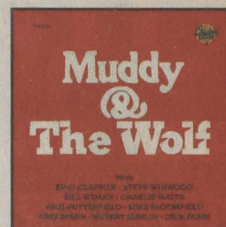
The Electric/His Best
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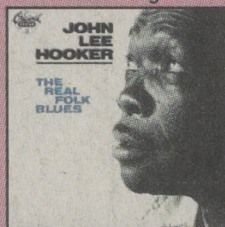
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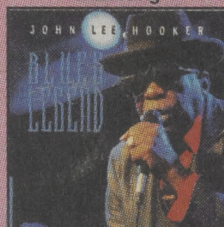
Muddy and The Wolf
Muddy Waters & Howlin' Wolf



The Best Of ('65 to '74)
John Lee Hooker



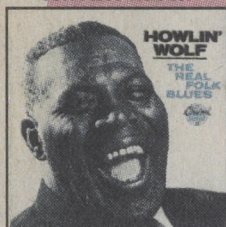
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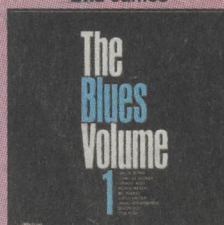
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Various Artists



Greatest Blues Legends
Various Artists



Best Of The Blues
Various Artists



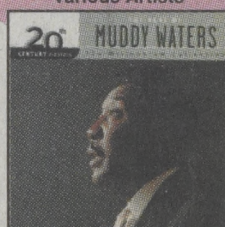
The Blues Volume 1
Various Artists



Best Of The Blues Vol. 2
Various Artists



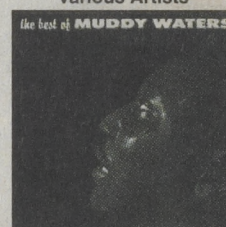
The London Sessions
Howlin' Wolf



The Millennium Collection
Muddy Waters



Blues Legend
Muddy Waters



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